

them, these insects being unable to bear the odour of the earth in which ants have been.'

FRANK LANE

[The subject of Birds 'anting' themselves was first raised in the *Journal* by Mr. B. B. Osmaston. (*Journ. B.N.H.S.*, Vol. XIX, p. 752). In a later issue (Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, Mr. Salim Ali published a number of recorded instances and gave the various theories offered in explanation of the curious habit. Further notes appeared in Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, p. 182 (B. B. Osmaston) and p. 640 (T. Bainbridge Fletcher); Vol. XLII, p. 935 (N. G. Pillai).—Eds.]

XIII—EGG-LAYING PERIOD OF THE COMMON INDIAN MONITOR.

Having read Mr. Charles McCann's remarks on the appearance of the young of *Varanus monitor* (L.) in this *Journal*, Vol. XLII, No. 1 dated December, 1940, I record the following incident of eggs having been laid at an apparently unusually early period.

At the end of October, 1942, a friend of mine captured an adult specimen of this reptile on Elephanta Island, Bombay. After examination I found that it was a gravid female and decided to take it back to my room for further observation; it was placed in a sack, therefore, and so transported back by launch to Colaba on the 1st November. On removing it from the sack, I was surprised to find that one egg had already been laid during the short journey. After this it was given the freedom of my room and appeared to make itself quite at home, as it entered a drawer in the dressing-table and deposited some more eggs amongst my clothes! This was on the 2nd November when three eggs were laid, followed on the 3rd by the fifth egg. The following day, unfortunately, the monitor had to be returned to Elephanta Island owing to circumstances which prevented me keeping it for further observations. At the time it was returned, however, another seven eggs could be distinctly felt through the skin on either side of the belly, thus making a total of twelve eggs in all.

The specimen referred was 3 feet 5 inches long, the tail accounting for 2 feet of this.

ORDNANCE DEPOT,
BOMBAY,
February 27th, 1944.

J. D. ROMER,
Sergeant.

XIV.—A GOOD METHOD OF WEIGHING FISH WHICH ARE TOO HEAVY FOR A SPRING BALANCE.

(With a text-figure.)

In the Miscellaneous Note No. XIII in *Journal* No. 4, Vol. XLIII on 'Record Mahseer' by Col. R. W. Burton, I notice that two of these big fish had to be halved in order to weigh them. This prompts me to remind your members of the 'Principle of Moments'.

All that is required for this method is a long, strong stick (of fairly even cross section) and a measure. Hanging the fish on one